

Wicker Park Lutheran Church

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April 3, 2026

We know this story: The pressure rises. The truth bends. Then, crowds form. And we know this system: It preserves itself. It maintains order. And it calls all of it justice. And we know these people: Peter, who was certain that force would fix what fear had broken. Pilate, who was caught between truth and power, and chose what kept things stable. And the crowd, who were loud, reactive, certain... and wrong. You see, this story is not hard to understand. But it is hard to face.

And this same story is happening right now. In the wars we pretend to justify — where human lives become the cost. In the environment we destroy — where our food, our familiarity, and our future burns, floods, and breaks. In who gets pushed outside — immigrants, refugees, and trans people, who are called problems instead of people. In the ways that violence becomes the answer to every wrongdoing and power imbalance. And in the quieter ways— where we avoid, we justify, and we look away because the status quo serves us. And all of it, all of it, leads here. To a cross.

So, tonight's question is not whether we understand this story; because of course we do. The question is: where the hell is God in it?

In tonight's story, Jesus did not step away. He did not fight back. He did not run. He did not save himself. He went where the story led. Into betrayal. Into violence. Into suffering. Into death.

And this is tonight's claim: There is no place God will not go. Not the worst of what we do. Not the systems we build. Not the harm we justify. Not even death itself. Our God enters it. Fully. Completely. Without turning away.

And tonight— that is what we are reminded: there is no place God will not go. For, even now— God is here.